Recovery Time

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/60190450.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Major Character Death
Category:	F/F
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Alana Bloom/Margot Verger, Alana Bloom & Jack Crawford
Characters:	Alana Bloom, Jack Crawford
Additional Tags:	BSHCI, alana is not okay
Language:	English
Series:	Part 6 of Tales of the BSHCI
Stats:	Published: 2024-10-31 Words: 1,409 Chapters: 1/1

Recovery Time

by Maidenhair_Tree

Summary

They say that the time needed to recover from a breakup is about half the length of the relationship.

For Dr. Alana Bloom, that means that she will need five and a half years to recover from her nearly 11 year friendship with Hannibal Lecter.

Notes

Previously posted on Twitter

The story is pretty serious until the final section when it gets a bit cracky. I enjoy the shift in tone so decided to keep it. Hopefully, it is not too disjointed.

See the end of the work for more notes

They say that the time needed to recover from a breakup is about half the length of the relationship.

For Dr. Alana Bloom, that means that she will need five and a half years to recover from her nearly 11 year friendship with Hannibal Lecter.

It will be even longer if you view their current status as doctor-patient as a continuation of their original relationship. Alana's own therapist sees it that way although they have agreed to table that discussion for now. Her parents and brothers also feel that way but they have not agreed to table anything. She increasingly finds herself avoiding calls and visits.

Alana would like for her son to have a relationship with her family. But when together, she sees them looking at Morgan with unease. Her son heavily resembles Mason and she can see her family recalling the horrors that were posthumously revealed in the media. When she first announced her pregnancy, her mother had asked point blank if she would have perpetuated Mason's legacy if he had died poor.

"No, of course not," she had answered. She loved her mother but what a ridiculous question.

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Alana is searching radio stations on the way to work. She usually avoids local media as jokes about Hannibal or Mason are far too common. But today she has finished her audiobook and wants to listen to music.

As she searched the dial she hears a snippet of Mahler, a favorite composition of Hannibal. Suddenly she is transported back to the dining room at Chandler Square. The smell of savory food, the bitterness of his home brewed beer, adrenaline pumping through her veins as she is challenged by and successfully stands her ground with Dr. Hannibal Lecter on the subject of psychiatry.

She spends over an hour parked on the side of the road gathering herself. Alana often wonders if any of it was ever real, if at any time, Hannibal had enjoyed her company. Reveled in their debates. Genuinely valued her opinion. And, if he did, does he ever miss it as much as she does now.

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Aside from Hannibal, Alana has little interest in the BSHCI's patients. Her love of the field has died alongside her image of the man who had pushed her to excel. But a recently admitted patient (aka an inmate) has managed to revive some lukewarm interest.

She had seen a similar case during her residency but does not recall all of the details. The attending physician, of course, now occupies the grandest suite that the BSHCI has to offer but Alana cannot ask. There is no way that she can trust that Hannibal would give her accurate information or direction. He would undoubtedly enjoy winding her up and watching her go.

There were other residents involved in the patient case that Hannibal had used as a teaching opportunity. She could ask them. Alana has contact information for most of them.

She does not reach out . Alana largely avoids all local colleagues these days but none more so than those whom she had learned alongside at Johns Hopkins.

There is a cannibal shaped shadow haunting those interactions.

Alana has tried addressing it directly only to be pressed for salacious details. Not that she blames them. They may be psychiatrists but they have all heard about the beer that he brewed specially for his protege. They want to know all about it along with the murders, the sex, the food. Not always in that order.

She can picture them at conferences and parties, already mini-celebrities based on their previous associations, feigning reluctance as they divulge her secrets.

Her more recent strategy has been ignoring it as if she always needed a cane, had billions of dollars at her disposal, and who has not had a bad breakup that ended in defenestration, a shattered hip, and a looming death threat.

It results in a lot of awkward pauses.

In the end she reaches out to a colleague in Chicago instead. Someone she met the previous year. He helps her work out a treatment plan and she is satisfied with the resolution.

But there is no joy in solving a great mystery. No excitement for the next challenge. Psychiatry was once her greatest passion but it is now just a means of controlling her enemy.

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Sometimes Alana will walk into Hannibal's cell as he studies something with great attention. A book. A drawing. Or just staring at the wall, his mind so engaged that his body is completely still.

It is reminiscent of a thousand other times from before. Observing him read a patient file or studying a painting in a gallery or slicing vegetables in his kitchen.

Alana had not known him during his surgeon days but she now pictures him carefully slicing Beverly Katz into perfect pieces for display. The same look of intense concentration upon his face.

She wants to cry for the man that may never have been but whom she has still lost. She will not, however, allow herself the indulgence of tears outside of her own therapist's office.

Dr. Klein will point out that she is unnecessarily extending the relationship with Hannibal. That distance is needed for healing and perspective. That Alana serving as his doctor has no

impact upon her family's safety.

And Alana will listen and hear the wisdom in her therapist's words even as she knows that it does not apply to her.

Her relationship with Hannibal Lecter is now 14 years old. She will not begin to recover until the day that he dies.

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Alana has a monthly dinner with Jack Crawford. It is usually just the two of them although Brian Zeller or Jimmy Price will occasionally join them.

Aside from Margot, Jack has become Alana's closest confidant.

Her family disapproves of her decision to run the BSHCI and they worry that her son will take after Mason. Jack views both the career decision and the wealth as strategic moves to ensure her safety. Plus the widower speaks sadly of how it had been too late for he and Bella to have children, and he is clearly pleased that Alana gets to have the joy.

Old and new acquaintances are increasingly suspect in a world of electronic gossip and litigious Baptists. Jack can be told anything about Hannibal, Morgan, lawsuits, etc. and it will go no further.

Jack has become Alana's bedrock.

One night over dinner, Alana decided to ask the widower if he ever feels conflicted about his past and current relationship with Hannibal.

"Do you ever wish that when you came to this fork in the road that you had chosen the other direction?" she asks over their entrees.

Jack shakes his head, which does not surprise her. He is not a man to second guess himself.

“No, I’m happy that I chose the red pill,” he responds.

Alana has no idea what his response means. “I’m sorry. I don’t get the reference.”

Jack looks at her, eyebrows raised in surprise. “You know, red pill reveals the truth and knowledge, whereas the blue pill allows you to stay dumb, fat, and happy.”

“I have never heard of this. Is it from a book?”

“It’s from The Matrix!” Jack exclaims with no explanation of what that is. “You never heard of Morpheus?”

“Greek mythology?”

“No! Black dude, shaved head, knows Kung Fu and every other martial art, looks awesome in sunglasses. Coolest motherfucker ever.”

Alana hopes that her increasing concern is not obvious. Jack has clearly developed a fantasy about a knowledge giving superhero who fits his own physical description.

“And where does one find Morpheus?”

“You don’t. He finds you when you are ready. He found The One locked away in a soul sucking office where his true potential was being wasted.”

Oh, god, it's a metaphor for Will Graham.

"His nemesis is a really polite guy with slicked back hair who always wears a suit."

Fuck .

How has Alana not seen how much Jack was struggling? She views him as family.

The conversation is fortunately interrupted by her chef checking in and the topic changes.

She debates telling Margot but ultimately decides to respect her friend's privacy. His fantasy character seems to be helping him cope and harms no one.

As they say their goodbyes, Jack suddenly smiles.

"Next time, I'll tell you about the Bowery King, who rules New York City. He is all seeing and all knowing."

Double fuck .

End Notes

I will leave it to the reader to decide whether Alana is behind in her movie watching or if these movies do not exist in the Hannibal TV verse and Jack is truly delusional.

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